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VETERANS HOME



COLUMBIA FALLS, MONTANA



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PHOTO BY MEL RUDER

RICHARD P. WALSH, Superintendent

The following pages reflect some of the home life and activities which are a part of the Montana Veterans' Home.

There is an ever-increasing need for this type of facility and it is a determination of all the people of Montana to provide for their senior citizens of the Armed Forces.

It is the hope of the Administration to provide a happy and cheerful surrounding for the members through their declining years.

We express our thanks for this happy Home, not only to God, but to the citizens of Montana.

Sincerely,

Richard P. Walsh, Superintendent

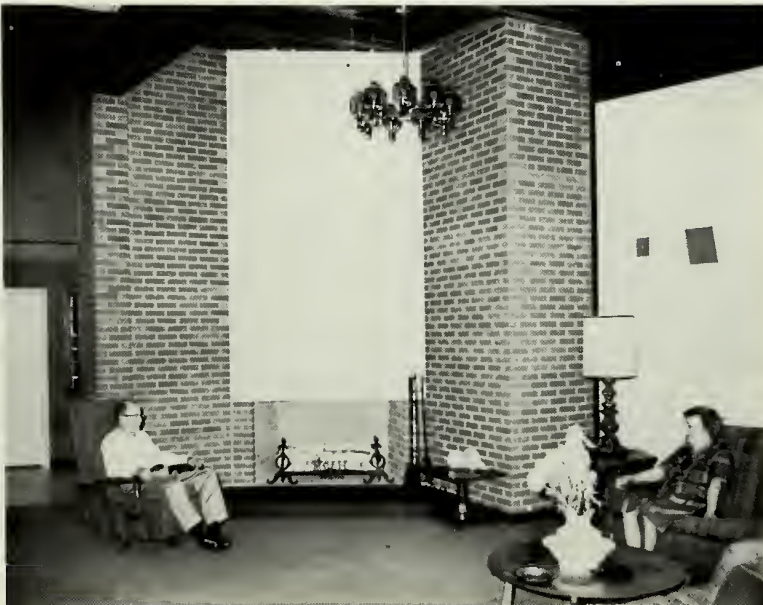


HISTORY AND FUTURE  
of  
MONTANA VETERANS' HOME  
Columbia Falls, Montana

The Montana Veterans' Home is located in Flathead County, approximately two miles from downtown Columbia Falls, Montana. It is maintained by the State of Montana to provide a home and subsistence for veterans honorably discharged from any branch of the Armed Services of the United States of America, who have become unable to earn a livelihood by reason of such service or because of age. Under certain circumstances, wives or widows of veterans may be admitted to the Home.

The Home was established by an Act of the State Legislature, Fourth Legislative Assembly, Article 10, Sec. 1, in 1895. The land upon which the Home is located was donated by the Northern International Improvement Company consisting of 146.9 acres bordering the Flathead River. A donation of \$10,000 from the citizens of Columbia Falls started the construction of the first building, which was dedicated May 30, 1896. The first member was admitted June 21, 1897. At one time the Home raised its

Below: Members enjoy spacious and well-furnished lounge in the new building.



Above: Main entrance to the new building.

Members find well lighted and furnished rooms much to their liking.





Married couple find the "Home" a pleasant place to spend their retirement.

The beautiful Flathead River provides opportunity for some fine fishing.



own cattle and produce; however, this was discontinued some years ago. A hospital was established and staffed on the grounds. It was later discontinued for economical and practical reasons. Regular medical inspections are presently conducted by a local physician and an ambulance is still maintained to transport the sick or injured to a nearby hospital.

A veterans' cemetery is situated in a most unique setting. It looks out on the Rocky Mountain range and the peaks of Glacier National Park.

With membership increasing, a 20-bed dormitory was constructed in 1956.

A new veterans' dormitory unit was approved by the Montana Legislature in 1967. This new complex houses sixty-one members, a physician's office and the administrative staff offices. It also has a complete modern kitchen and a dining room with seating capacity of over one hundred. Dedication was held May 23 with the Honorable FORREST H. ANDERSON, Governor of Montana, officially opening the new facility. Two bronze cannons which were acquired from the Rock Island Arsenal April, 1916 will be mounted on each side of the flag pole facing the main access road. When practical, older buildings are to be phased out in accordance with the State long-range building program.

The legislature of 1969 approved construction of a 40-bed nursing unit. Federal matching funds will be used to finance the

National Guard and Veterans' groups present Massed Colors at New Home Dedication.





construction. However, ~~the rising costs of construction will limit this to approximately 25 beds.~~ A request is being made for additional funds to add another 25 beds to this project. It is to become a part of the new complex; *a 40-bed nursing home now.*

Work is now under way clearing a portion of the grounds facing the Flathead River which will be used as a park equipped with picnic tables, benches, boat landing, outdoor cooking facilities, etc.

Two baseball diamonds have been built on the grounds for youth activities and to further the recreation program of the Home. These activities are all being sponsored by various veterans' and civic organizations with help donated by people of the community and those members physically able to participate.

The land surrounding the buildings is landscaped and attractively laid out in lawns. One employee serves as grounds keeper. Maintenance and care is furnished by members donating their time to make the Home more attractive in appearance.

Governor Anderson requested the State Landscape architect to prepare a schematic long-range design for the beautification of the entire Veterans' Home property. Proposed future development may include a small golf course. Other recreational projects will include a horseshoe pitching area large enough to accommodate tournaments. Also, croquet and other lawn games are planned. A greenhouse is to be erected for the purpose of providing therapy for the members while furnishing new plants for the garden, flower gardens and planters on the grounds.

Below: "Old Main", one of the original buildings built in 1896.



Above: Picture shows side entrance and patio of new building built in 1970.

Below: The Superintendent's residence at the Home.



## RECREATION

An essential part of life in retirement, is having various forms of recreation. Here at the Home, every effort is made to have available any form of recreation desired. Group activities, dances, bingo, and parties are provided for those who wish to participate. Local groups from the Musicians Union and schools provide excellent entertainment. The Recreation Hall has pool and billiard tables which offer hours of entertainment. Several game tables give the cribbage and pinochle players a chance to test their skills. Hobby shops, woodwork, leather crafts, and various other arts and crafts are available. Two TV rooms are available for those who enjoy television.

The Home is located on a bank overlooking the beautiful Flathead River which provides fine fishing and boating. Nearby lakes and streams are available for picnicing, boating and outdoor recreation.

Local veterans and civic groups are most generous in including the members of the Home in their activities. The Home is part of the community and the community is part of the Home.



Above: Free bingo games provided by local veterans' groups are a popular pastime.

Below: Bus service to town four times a day enables members to do their shopping.



Below: Congenial members gather to relax in the Main Lounge





## MEDICAL AND RELIGIOUS SERVICES

Medical services are handled by a local physician who visits the Home twice a week; however, he is available twenty-four hours a day for emergencies. When the new nursing facility is completed there will be round the clock nursing care. Ambulance service is provided to either Whitefish or Kalispell hospitals. Transportation is provided by the Veterans' Administration for those who have to go to the hospital at Fort Harrison.

*local minister*  
Services are conducted each Sunday in the Home Chapel by the Chaplain. Those wishing to go to other services in town are afforded transportation by parishioners of their church.



Above: Members enjoy the Senior Citizens dance.

Below: Well-stocked library provides reading material.



Below: Months of painstaking work is displayed by member showing topographical, to scale, Montana Map.



## THE STAFF



Above: Home-cooked food is enjoyed family style by the members.

Left Below: All modern kitchen equipment makes the cooks' job easier.



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At the present time there are twenty-four men and women on staff at the Home. They include administrative help, engineers, nurses aids, cooks, food service workers, housekeepers, grounds-men and maintenance personnel. When the new nursing home is completed, there will be full-time registered nurses, practical nurses as well as an increase in other departments as the services demand.

Below: A batch of home-made pies await the members tonight.





## ELIGIBILITY FOR MEMBERSHIP

The Montana Veterans' Home's primary function is to provide a home and subsistence for honorably discharged veterans. The department may also admit wives or widows of honorably discharged veterans to the Home if space permits.

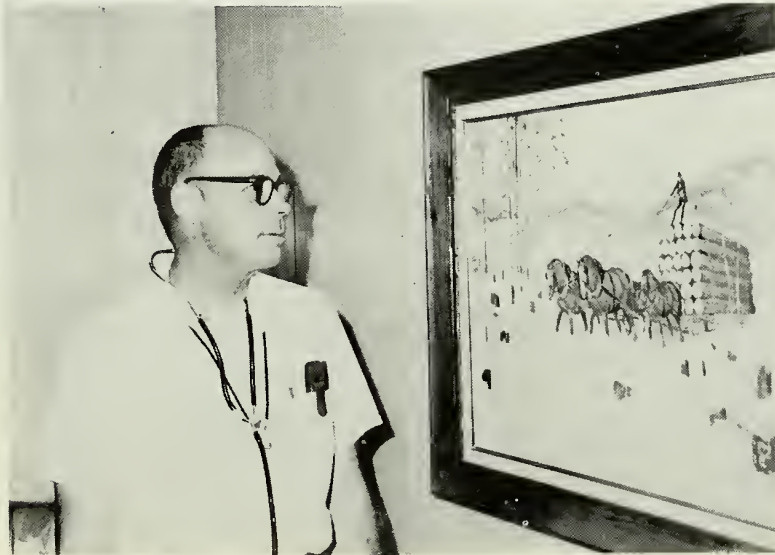
To be eligible for residence in the Montana Veterans' Home under the regulations prescribed by the State Department of Institutions, a person shall:

- (1) Be an honorably discharged veteran, or the wife or widow of a veteran, who served in the Armed Forces of the United States.
- (2) Be a semi-invalid, ambulatory and have become unable to earn a livelihood as a result of the disability.
- (3) Have resided in Montana for a period of two (2) years immediately prior to making application for admittance.
- (4) Not have been convicted of a felony or of a crime involving moral turpitude.
- (5) Not be an alcoholic or have a record of habitual inebriation.
- (6) If a woman, be fifty (50) years of age or older.



Above: Office personnel keep the paper work rolling.

Below: Dr. W. F. Bennett, one of the local doctors who administers medical services to the Home members.



Below: A personal interview with the superintendent.





Above right: Partial view of well-kept cemetery reserved exclusively for members of the Home.

Right: The United Veterans' Council and all veterans' organizations participate in Memorial Day Ceremonies at the Home.







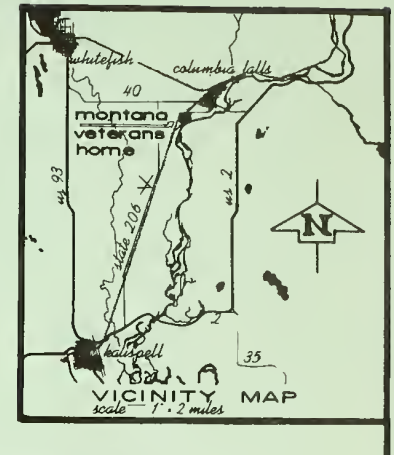
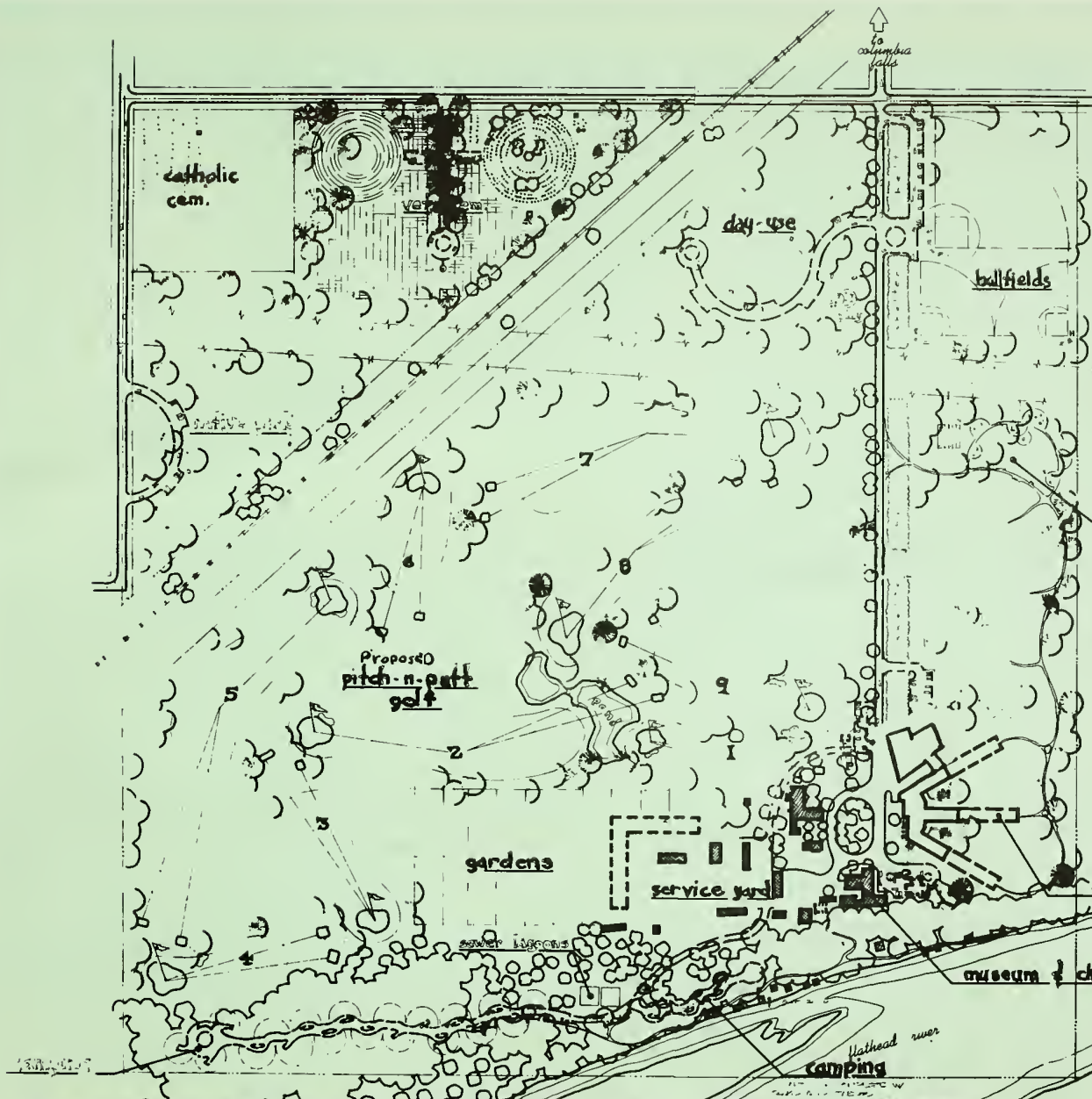
This booklet made possible through the generosity of the following VFW Districts of The Department of Montana: District One, District Two and Auxiliary, District Three, District Four, District Five, District Six and District Seven.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to the VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS and to those members who have worked to produce this brochure.

The message that they wish to impart is that this HOME is for all Montana veterans and that it is not an institution. Visitors are always welcome.

Sincerely,  
Richard P. Walsh  
Superintendent

PHOTOS BY HARRIS ENDRESON



### passive activities

VERSESUES, EAST HILLS,  
COLUMBIA RIVER, BENTON  
TRAIL, AND SUITE

### legend ...

- existing bldg. to remain
- proposed bldg.
- existing road
- proposed road
- existing tree
- proposed tree
- proposed trail



# preliminary master site plan

MONTANA VETERANS HOME, DEPT. OF INSTITUTIONS, STATE OF MONTANA, COLUMBIA FALLS, MONTANA

prepared by r. mayer, landscape architect for the council on natural resources and development